CHAPTER 5
SECURITY OPERATIONS

The reconnaissance platoon conducts security operations to protect the main body from enemy observation and surprise attack. These operations give the main body commander early warning and time to concentrate his combat power at the right time and place to defeat the enemy. The types of security missions used are: screen, guard, and cover. Although the reconnaissance platoon may conduct screening or reconnaissance missions to support a larger forces guard or cover mission, these missions are beyond the platoon's ability. The primary task of a screen is to observe, identify, and report information. The reconnaissance platoon cannot effectively screen the battalion's flank, front, or rear by itself. Therefore, the battalion tasks additional forces to complement the reconnaissance platoon's screen. This chapter focuses on how the reconnaissance platoon conducts moving and stationary screens. It also discusses counter-reconnaissance, which is a subset of security that prevents hostile observations of a force, area, or place. The reconnaissance platoon screens and conducts surveillance as part of the battalion's overall countereconnaissance effort.

Section I. SECURITY FUNDAMENTALS

All military forces employ both active and passive security measures to protect themselves against acts designed to impair their combat effectiveness. Security operations are the combined effects of a forces security measures. Security is a principle of war. Commanders consider security when conducting any type of operation. Security operations are conducted forward, to the flanks, or to the rear of the battalion.

5-1. FUNDAMENTALS

Certain fundamentals are common to all security missions. Soldiers must observe these fundamentals when planning and executing their mission.

a. **Orienting on the Battalion.** If the battalion moves, the reconnaissance platoon must know of its movement and, if necessary, reposition itself. The reconnaissance platoon leader must know the battalion commander's scheme of maneuver and where he wants the screening force in relation to the battalion's movement. The screen must be positioned where it can provide the needed security.

b. **Performing Continuous Reconnaissance.** The reconnaissance platoon conducts continuous reconnaissance during security operations

to obtain as much information as possible about the area of operations and the enemy.

c. **Providing Early and Accurate Warnings.** Early and accurate warnings of enemy approach are vital to successful operations. The battalion commander needs this information to shift and concentrate his forces to meet and defeat the enemy. The reconnaissance platoon occupies OPs and patrols to provide long-range observation, to observe enemy movement, and to report the enemy's size, location, and activity to the battalion commander.

d. **Providing Reaction Time and Maneuver Space.** The reconnaissance platoon screens far enough from the battalion to identify enemy activity early. This allows the battalion commander time to react. If directed, the reconnaissance platoon uses indirect fire to slow the enemy's rate of advance and to provide more time for the battalion to maneuver to positions of advantage.

e. **Maintaining Enemy Contact.** Once the platoon identifies the enemy, it maintains visual contact to provide the commander with current information. If the platoon looses sight of the enemy, it attempts to regain contact and maintain it until ordered to do otherwise. The platoon must maintain visual contact without being sighted and engaged by the enemy.

5-2. SCREENING FORCE
A screening force maintains surveillance, provides early warning to the main body, impedes and harasses the enemy with artillery fires, and destroys enemy reconnaissance within its abilities. A screening force operates within the range of supporting artillery. The reconnaissance platoon leader should clarify those conditions when the platoon uses indirect fire to destroy enemy reconnaissance. The reconnaissance platoon fights only for self-protection.

5-3. GUARD FORCE
A guard force accomplishes the tasks of a screening force. It prevents enemy ground observation and direct tire against the main body. A guard force reconnoiters, attacks, defends, and delays, as needed, to accomplish its mission. It normally operates within the range of the main body's indirect-fire weapons. The reconnaissance platoon conducts a screen and or reconnaissance for the guard force.

5-4. COVERING FORCE
A covering force accomplishes all the tasks of screening and guard forces. It also operates apart from the main body to develop the situation early. It deceives, disorganizes, and destroys enemy forces. Unlike screening or guard forces, a covering force is a tactically self-contained force. It is

organized with enough CS and CSS forces to operate independently of the main body. The reconnaissance platoon conducts reconnaissance and screens in support of a covering force.

Section II. SCREENING MISSIONS

The infantry battalion uses a screening force in both the offense and defense. The exact size and composition of the screening force depends on the width of its sector in the defense or its zone of attack in the offense. The nature of the terrain and the specific tasks the screening force is expected to accomplish also affect the composition. Early warning is always a screening force task. Screening forces operate to the front, flanks, and rear of the battalion. The reconnaissance platoon and designated forces screen as part of the battalion's overall security plan.

5-5. SCREEN

During a screening mission, the following are accomplished:

- Provide early warning of enemy approach or location.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of assigned areas.
- Gain and maintain visual contact and report enemy activity.
- Identify enemy reconnaissance elements.
- Impede and harass the enemy by controlled use of indirect fires, when authorized.
- Guide reaction forces, if planned.
- Report information to the protected force.
- Destroy enemy reconnaissance forces, when authorized.

5-6. OBSERVATION POST

An OP is a position from which military observations (visual, audible, or other means) are made or from which fire is directed and adjusted and has the proper communications. OPs are used during screening and reconnaissance operations. The battalion commander designates an initial screen line. In coordination with the battalion S2, the platoon leader selects terrain along the screen line to site OPs (Figure 5-1, page 5-4). If these locations differ from what was previously coordinated, the platoon leader reports the new locations to the battalion staff. The platoon should plan to operate no more than three OPs with one squad for each OP. Once on the screen line, the platoon leader adjusts the location of the OPs as the terrain dictates. From the OP, the squad reports the enemy size, activity, location, and disposition to the commander, and, if directed, calls for indirect fires.
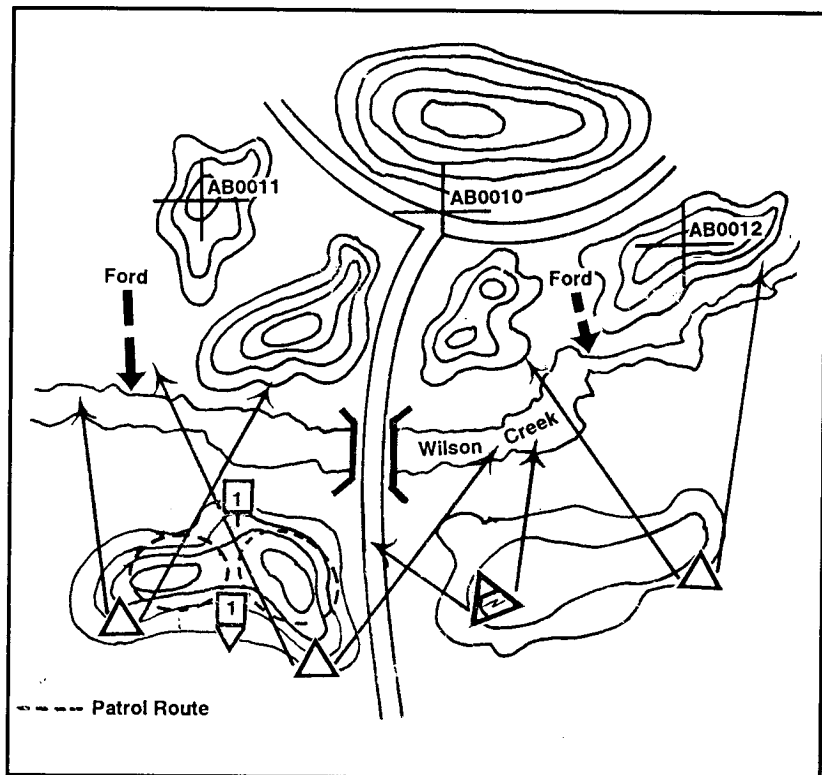
Figure 5-1. Observation post.

a. **Selection of the Observation Post.** The platoon leader selects the general location for the OP. The squad leader selects the exact position when he is on the ground. An OP should have the following characteristics:

(1) *Good observation of the assigned area or sector.* The field of observation of adjacent OPs should overlap to ensure full coverage of the sector. The OP should be able to observe TRPs and, if necessary, to adjust indirect fires. Areas that cannot be observed from an OP are patrolled at irregular intervals.

(2) *Good cover and concealment.* Select positions with cover and concealment to reduce vulnerability on the battlefield. OPs may not occupy the position with the best observation in order to obtain better concealment.

(3) *Covered and or concealed routes to and from the observation post.* Soldiers must be able to enter and leave the OP without being seen by

the enemy. Positions should not draw the enemy's attention. Positions such as a water tower, abandoned or destroyed equipment, or a lone building may be enemy artillery TRPs.

(4) *Observers avoid skylining.* OPs should avoid hilltops. The OPs are positioned farther down the slope of a hill or on the side, providing there are covered and concealed routes into the position. OPs can be located on the reverse slope. In this case, observers move forward so they can observe.

b. **Observation Post Positions.** If the best terrain for the OPs is beyond the initial screen line, the platoon leader displays initiative by placing the OPs in their positions (staying within the battalion's *sector* or zone) where squads can accomplish their mission. He then informs the battalion staff of the locations. The platoon leader also plans alternate and subsequent OPs throughout the sector. These OPs should have interlocking fields of observation.

c. **Manning of Observation Posts.** Each OP must be operated by a squad. This is required due to limited radio equipment, the need for local OP security, and the need for continuous observation. At least one soldier observes the assigned area while the other soldier secures the OP. The squad leader records observations and sends reports to the platoon leader. Soldiers should change jobs every half hour to avoid fatigue, which can decrease effectiveness. The squad leader establishes a rest and mainte-nance plan to ensure the squad can perform continuous operations. The squad operating the OP reconnoiters other OP sites and patrols dead space between OPs The squads are equipped to observe, to secure the area, to report information, and to call for indirect fire. The equipment used includes—

- A map or sketch of the area.
- A compass.
- Communications equipment (wire, radio).
- Observation devices (binoculars, NVDs).
- Report formats contained in the SOP.
- Individual weapons.
- Seasonal uniform and LBE.
- Sufficient food and water.

d. **Observation Post Security.** Soldiers on an OP employ active and passive measures to protect themselves from enemy detection and from enemy direct and indirect fires. The soldier's best defense is a covered and concealed position, which lessens the chance of being detected.

(1) At a minimum, construct a hasty position, add camouflage and overhead cover to the position as time allows. This increases survivability against enemy direct and indirect fires. The squad enforces strict noise and light discipline and reduces the amount of movement in and around the OP to essential movement only.

(2) Wire communications reduce the OP's electronic signature. Use a directional antenna that is masked from the enemy when possible. This reduces the possibility of enemy jamming and degrades the effectiveness of enemy direction-finding equipment. If available and time permits, emplace PEWS or GSRs in areas that cannot be observed or in dead spaces between OPs.

(3) Trip flares or AP mines provide early warning and protection from enemy personnel. Active patrolling around and between OPs also increases security. Patrols focus on areas that cannot be seen from the OPs.

e. **Actions at an Observation Post.** The platoon leader or squad leader briefs personnel on the following before sending them to the OP:
- When, where, and how to locate the OP.
- Where the OP will observe.
- When and how to report.
- Conditions for the withdrawal.
- Criteria for engaging target, "Indirect fire."
- Challenge and password.
- When they will be replaced.
- OP personnel briefback the leader.

f. **Visual Search Techniques.** Soldiers manning OPs must constantly search the assigned area or sector to identify signs of enemy forces. One soldier with binoculars, or another observation device, searches the entire area for obvious targets, unnatural colors, dust, shiny objects, outlines, or movement. The soldier raises his eyes from in front of the position to the greatest range of his sector of observation (Figure 5-2). If the sector is wide, he can divide it into subsectors. The soldier searches overlapping 50-meter-wide strips (Figure 5-3), alternating from left to right and right to left until the entire area is searched. Other soldiers on the OP scan the area, look for signs of movement, and direct the soldier with binoculars to search specific areas. When a suspicious area is seen, it is thoroughly searched. The map is oriented with the field of view to allow a quick and accurate report and to request indirect fire, if authorized.
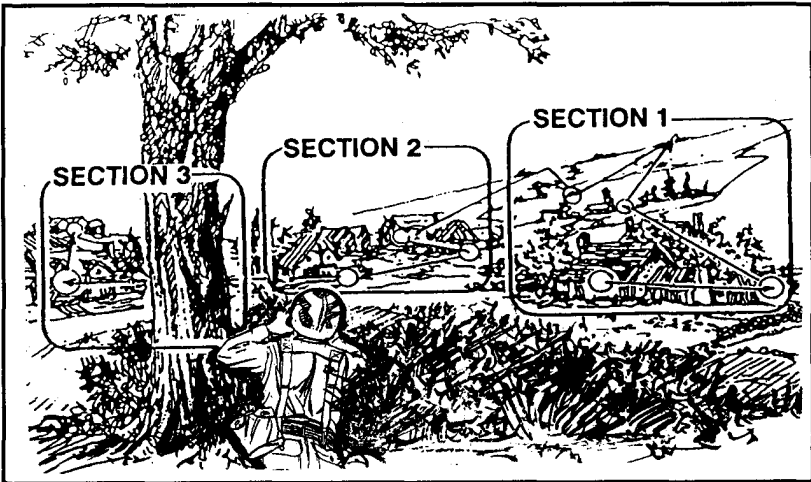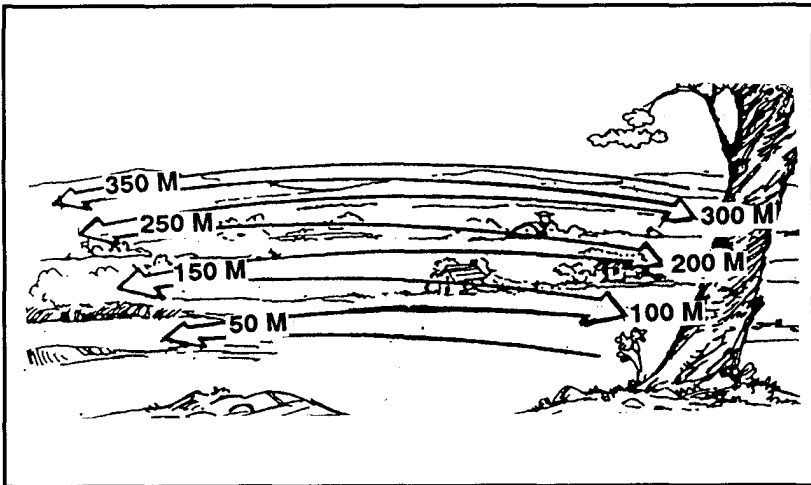
Figure 5-2. Overall search.

Figure 5-3. Overlapping 50-meter search.

5-7. MOVING AND STATIONARY SCREENS

A screen prevents the protected force from being surprised. The recon-
naissance platoon accomplishes this by maintaining surveillance from a
series of OPs along the screen line or in-depth. The reconnaissance
platoon conducts active patrolling to extend its observation or to cover
dead space and the area between OPs. It can screen both moving and
stationary forces. The battalion provides the platoon with specific screen-
ing priorities and control measures in its OPORD.

a. **Planning.** Planning and techniques of conducting a screen are the same whether the screen is to the front, flank, or rear of the battalion. A reconnaissance platoon can maintain continuous surveillance on at least three avenues of approach for a limited time.

(1) The battalion commander directs the reconnaissance platoon to screen when and where he needs advance warning of enemy activities. The commander and S3 provide guidance that includes the screen line, or specific areas within the area of operations over which the platoon must maintain surveillance. The S3 also establishes control measures, such as contact points, phase lines, and boundaries, from which they can control the platoon.

(2) Normally, when the reconnaissance platoon receives a screen mission from battalion, its sector is delineated by lateral boundaries, by an initial screen line, and by a rear boundary or phase line. The platoon leader can assign other phase lines or control measures to control the platoon. If this is done, the platoon ensures that the battalion staff is aware of the changes. If this is not accomplished, the platoon uses the battalion's control measures to report information. The R&S plan directs and ranks in order of priority the platoon's efforts. The platoon leader may be required to employ collection assets (GSR, PEWS, and RSTA equipment) based on these priorities.

(3) The platoon leader analyzes the terrain in his area of operation. This analysis, together with guidance provided by the S2, determines the avenues of approach for which the platoon will be responsible. Next, the platoon leader determines where, either on or behind the initial screen line, the platoon must occupy to maintain continuous surveillance on avenues of approach.

(4) The platoon leader can divide the platoon's sector into squad sectors by placing boundaries on easily identifiable terrain between high-speed avenues of approach. The boundaries tell each squad the terrain for which they are responsible. The platoon leader does not place a boundary on a road, trail, or other avenue of approach since the squads may be confused as to who is responsible. The platoon leader assigns one avenue of approach to a single squad.

(5) The platoon leader can establish phase lines or checkpoints to help control movement but coordinates and reports these to the battalion. He places the phase lines on easily identifiable terrain. These phase lines may also serve as subsequent screen lines. The platoon leader places contact points at the intersection of phase lines and boundaries so that squads can make physical contact during the screen mission and gaps do not form between the squads. TRPs are planned throughout the sector and should be easily identified (day and night).

(6) Along with planning for subsequent screen lines, the platoon leader could be directed to leave soldiers in place during the enemy's advance. If required, soldiers hide in the OPs and continue reporting enemy movement. When authorized, stay-behind OPs adjust indirect fires on follow-on enemy formations. The platoon leader coordinates and establishes rally points and routes of withdrawal for each of the stay-behind OPs

b. **Moving Screen.** The battalion S3 provides the reconnaissance platoon leader with an overlay that identifies the screen line, boundaries, objectives, and key phase lines. The platoon can effectively screen one flank of a moving battalion, a limited part of the battalion's frontage if screening forward, or the battalion's rear. The platoon's size and communications equipment limit screening to only one area at a time. When screening forward, the platoon might require transportation support to remain ahead of the battalion. The screen orients on the protected force, key terrain, danger areas, and avenues of approach in the battalion's zone.

(1) The exact requirements for the reconnaissance platoon are stated in the battalion's OPORD and shown graphically on the battalion's overlay. (An example of a battalion's overlay is shown in Figure 5-4, page 5-10.) In this scenario, C Company is the main attack. C Company moves along Axis Charlie to its assault position. A Company follows C Company up to Checkpoint One, then moves along axis Alpha. A Company occupies positions that allow it to suppress enemy forces on Objective One. B Company moves along Axis Bravo and occupies its assault position. Once all the companies and separate platoons are in position, A Company begins suppressing Objective One. B Company begins its assault of Objective Two as soon as A Company initiates fires. C Company, the main attack, assaults Objective One on order of the battalion commander. In this case, the actions of A Company and B Company divert the enemy's attention allowing C Company to assault Objective One by surprise. In this scenario, the reconnaissance platoon is required to screen C Company's movement along Axis Charlie. Once C Company occupies its assault position, the reconnaissance platoon screens along Range Road to warn the battalion of the expected enemy counterattack.

(2) Based on the battalion's requirements and the commander's intent, the platoon leader develops the plan. In this scenario, the platoon's mission is: screen C Company's movement along Axis Charlie in order to prevent enemy forces from disrupting the main attack from the east. The battalion graphics also show a follow-on mission of screening along Range Road in order to provide early warning of the enemy counterattack. The platoon leader determines how the platoon can accomplish its mission by identifying areas along Axis Charlie that if occupied

by enemy forces could disrupt C Company's movement. These areas are reconnoitered by a squad. If these areas do not show signs of enemy, then the squad establishes an OP and maintains surveillance until ordered to move. In the scenario, the platoon leader identifies five areas. He determines that no enemy is in these locations by reconnoitering each location and leaving a two- or three-man element in each position. The platoon leader ensures this is accomplished before C Company's movement along Axis Charlie. C Company ensures the axis is secure by sending a squad(+) on the axis before its movement. This element also places reconnaissance elements on the objective. If this mission, along with the screening mission, was given to the reconnaissance platoon, the platoon would have been overtasked. The battalion commander's decision to use C Company's personnel to secure the axis and reconnoiter the objective is a technique.
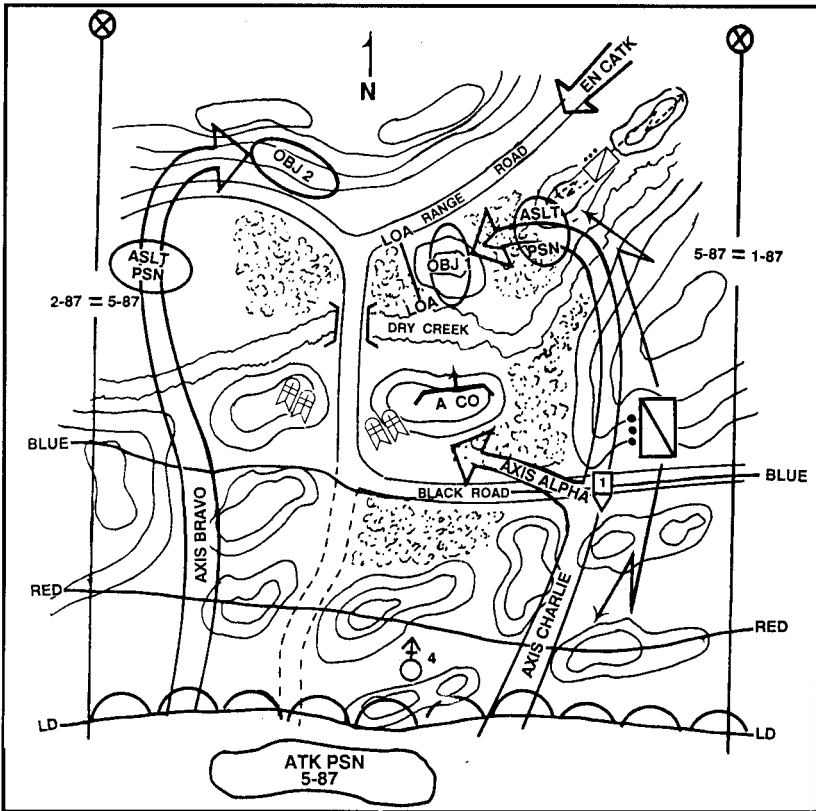

Figure 5-4. Example of a battalion overlay.

(3) Before C Company crosses the line of departure, the five OPs are in position. The platoon leader and a three-man element from 1st Squad stay parallel to C Company's movement along Axis Charlie. Once C Company crosses the LD, the remaining element from 1st Squad screens from OP 1 to OP 2. This element occupies OP 2 and awaits the arrival of the platoon leader and the rest of 1st Squad. When C Company crosses PL Red, the element initially occupying OP 2 (2d Squad(-)) screens from OP 2 to OP 3 and occupies OP 3. Once the platoon leader links up with elements from 1st Squad on OP 2, he notifies the element initially occupying OP 3 (2d Squad(-)) to screen from OP 3 to OP 4. The platoon leader and 1st Squad continue to move parallel to C Company. At OP 3, they link up with 2d squad(-) and move to OP 4. Once this linkup has occurred, 3d Squad (-) screens to OP 5. At OP 4, 1st Squad moves to OP 6 with the platoon leader, and 2d Squad moves to OP 7 with the PSG. This sequence of movements and screens is a technique that allows the reconnaissance platoon to screen C Company's movement along Axis Charlie and be in positions that allow the platoon to report the movement of enemy counterattack forces (Figure 5-5, page 5-12).

(4) The platoon leader coordinates with the S3 on the standard rate of march for the force conducting the operation. The platoon uses the rate of march to stay abreast or in front of the force being screened and to report other information. The platoon leader does not have time to adjust routes or to observe noncritical areas. If available, GSRs or sensors are used to observe avenues of approach or areas the platoon cannot cover due to time or manpower limitations. The platoon leader plans and coordinates indirect fires on choke points, likely avenues of approach, and key terrain that can aid in withdrawal or slow an enemy attack.

c. **Stationary Screen.** A platoon can effectively screen a flank, the front, or the rear of a stationary battalion. The platoon cannot screen both flanks effectively due to manpower limitations. The planning considerations and techniques of a stationary screen are the same as for a moving screen.

(1) The battalion commander and the S3 determine the area the reconnaissance platoon and other elements screen. The screen line generally traces where the screening elements establish observation posts. In addition to the screen line, the battalion establishes control measures such as contact or passage points. All personnel must know the location of screening elements. Forces that are unaware of the reconnaissance platoon's location can unknowingly engage withdrawing screening elements. (Typical graphics used during a stationary screen are shown in Figure 5-6 page 5-13.)

OP	OCCUPY	MOVE	FINAL OP POSITIONS
1	1ST SQD	C CO CROSS LD	OP 6 PL
2	2D SQD	C CO CROSS PL RED	
3	2D SQD	ON ORDER	OP 7/PSG
4	3D SQD	C CO CROSS PL BLUE	
5	3D SQD		OP 5/

Figure 5-5. Sketch of platoon's plan.

Figure 5-6. Battalion graphics for a stationary screen.

(2) As with the moving screen, the platoon establishes the stationary screen by setting up squad-sized OPs and, depending on METT-T, patrolling the dead space between the OPs (Figure 5-7 page 5-14). Unlike the moving screen, the OPs remain in one place. To enhance security, the OPs can occupy different positions based upon visibility.
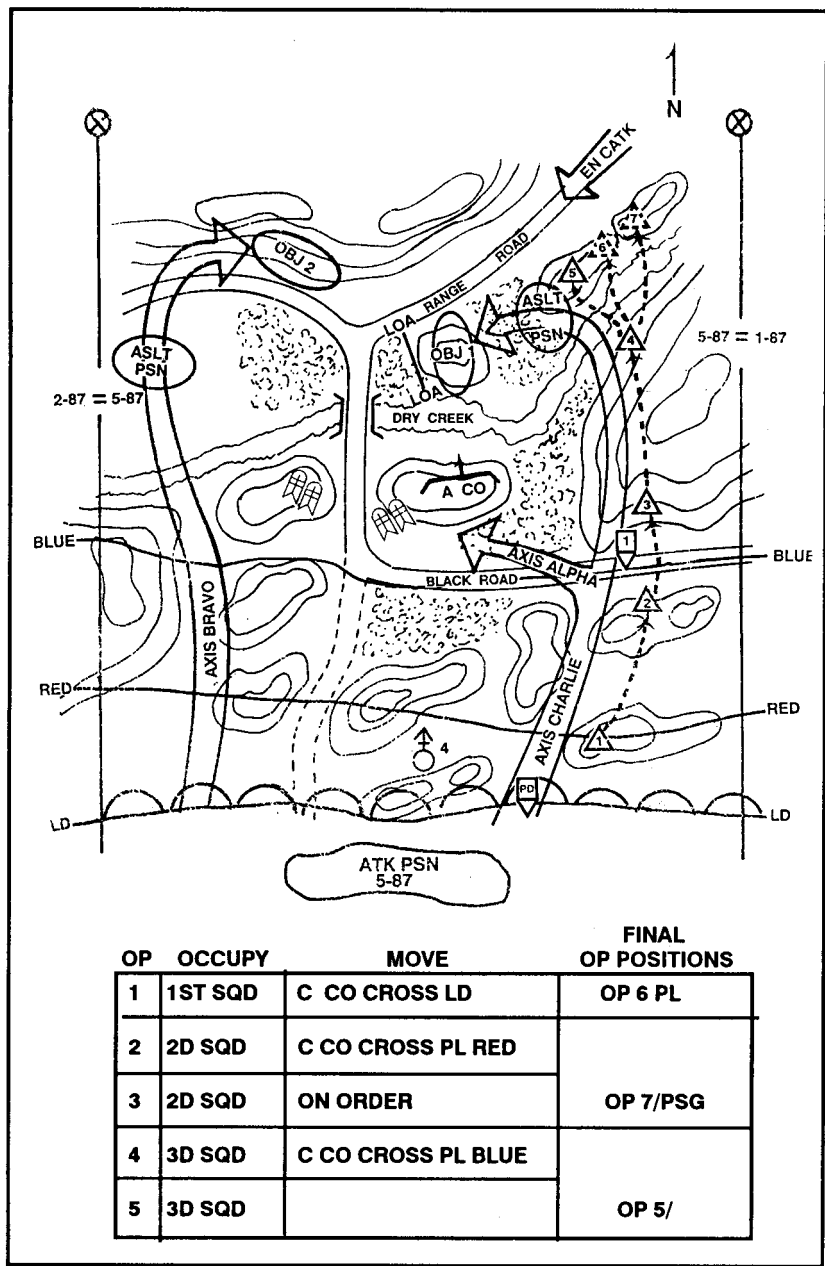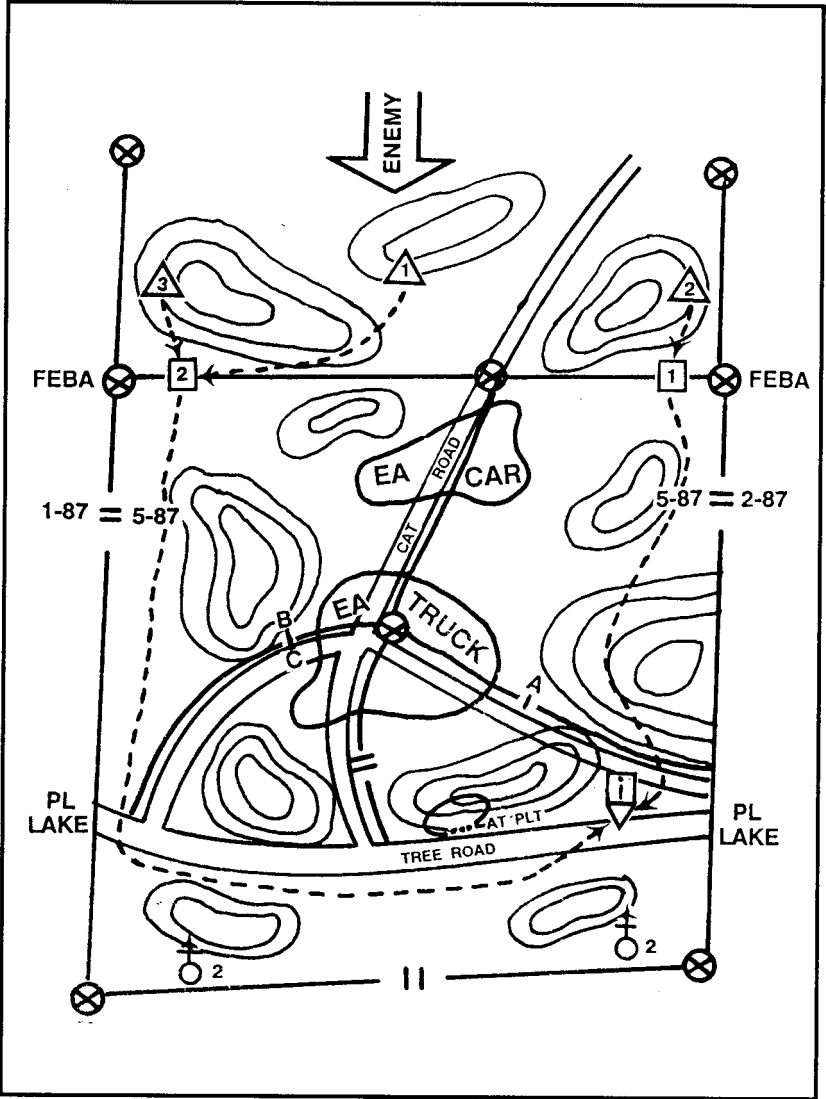
**Figure 5-7. Platoon leader's plan for a
stationary screen.**

(3) The platoon leader employs the platoon with two or three squads abreast by establishing OPs. He ensures that squad leaders know the avenue of approach or area they must observe and how they cover dead space between OPs. When possible, the platoon leader employs a squad on each OP. The platoon can be required to maintain its screen line for

several days. To operate an OP with less than a squad does not allow for continuous operation of the OP. By occupying OPs with a squad, the squad can patrol dead space and the area between OPs conduct resupply operations, and rest or sustain its personnel.

(4) The platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and RATELOs normally occupy an OP with one of the squads. The platoon leader and platoon sergeant do not need to beat the same OP. The location of the platoon headquarters depends on the criticality of the area and the best position for command and control. Part of the control consideration is the ability of the platoon leader to communicate with the squads and battalion. For short times (12 hours or less), five OPs can be occupied. The platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and RATELOs augmented with one soldier from each squad, can be the fourth and fifth OPs.

(5) As soldiers observe the enemy forces approaching the screen line, they report the information to the platoon leader, who then reports to battalion. At times, contact is maintained with the enemy by moving to other positions or by passing the contact off to a subsequent OP. The platoon can also report on the activities of follow-on forces. If required to conduct a stay-behind mission, the platoon remains hidden and reports on follow-on forces. Squads eventually link up at a designated location and exfiltrate back to friendly lines.

Section III. COUNTERRECONNAISSANCE

Counterreconnaissance prevents enemy reconnaissance elements from observing the battalion and the area of operation. Enemy reconnaissance elements conduct mounted and dismounted patrols to locate positions, identify friendly forces, and detect friendly activities. Enemy patrols are normally small. They move with stealth and use concealment. These elements must be detected and denied information or destroyed before they can report their observations. The battalion's overall counterrecon-naissance operations are integrated into the overall R&S plan. All forces and assets in the battalion join in this effort. The battalion counterrecon-naissance plan addresses the use of available combat forces to locate and destroy enemy reconnaissance elements. The reconnaissance platoon conducts a screen mission to locate enemy forces while other combat forces destroy enemy reconnaissance forces.

5-8. PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES

The key to the counterreconnaissance plan is how well the battalion coordinates the effort. The reconnaissance platoon is normally in posi-tion before the companies move into and occupy defensive positions. This ensures enemy elements are not operating within the battalion's area.

Based upon the terrain and enemy analysis, the S2 templates likely enemy reconnaissance objectives and routes. He recommends to the S3 and commander the general location and composition of forces needed to perform security. Consistent with the battalion commander's guidance, the S3 tasks subordinate forces to conduct counterreconnaissance.

5-9. SECURITY OPERATIONS TASKS

In counterreconnaissance operations, the reconnaissance platoon helps locate enemy reconnaissance for destruction by other elements or systems. The reconnaissance platoon participates in the overall counterreconnaissance effort. It maintains surveillance, provides early warning, and if directed, impedes and harasses enemy elements with supporting indirect fires. The commander must be specific when addressing the focus of the platoon's actions. If the platoon is conducting reconnaissance of something other than enemy reconnaissance elements, it is not directly part of the battalion counterreconnaissance force.

5-10. ASSETS

When the reconnaissance platoon detects the enemy's approach, a forward maneuver force is tasked with destroying enemy reconnaissance. The antitank platoon overmatches the most likely mounted avenues of approach and destroys detected enemy mounted reconnaissance elements. When available, ground surveillance radar helps identify enemy reconnaissance, especially during limited visibility.